



People UNITED in countries divided



CREATING FRIENDSHIPS FOR PEACE

Teen Family Handbook

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Welcome to Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP)!

Before completing the application form to participate in Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP), you will find that reading this Teen Family Handbook provides most, if not all, the information you need to know.

CFP is an all-volunteer peacebuilding and leadership training program for teenagers that promotes bi-communal friendships and activities not only for the teens themselves but for their families and friends. We hope that through these friendships and activities, trust and mutual respect will replace suspicion and fear.

Teens applying to the program should want to meet and become friends with members of the other community. Teens accepted to the program promise to spend at least a year, and hopefully more, working on bi-communal efforts through CFP.

Creating Friendships for Peace is a wonderful opportunity for teenagers to learn about the other community and about themselves. Through CFP activities, CFP teens learn new skills and try new challenges. They begin to consider things from different perspectives and focus on what unites people rather than what divides them. They realize that each one of us can make a difference and that together we can accomplish much.



"Building friendship, leadership and peace."

Teens applying to this unique program are expected to meet and become friends with members of the other community. If accepted, CFP strongly encourages teens to become lifelong members of the CFP Alumni network, working bi-communally and building bridges of trust whenever possible. The first year involves participating in a week-long Peace Camp. In year two, teens are eligible for a Residency Experience in the U.S.

CFP requires a significant commitment of time for teens, involving meetings and workshops on the weekends, opportunities for public presentations in schools, community centers, media, and special peacebuilding opportunities that may arise each year.

The program is also an excellent opportunity for teenagers to learn about the other community and themselves. Through activities, CFP teens learn new skills and meet new challenges. They begin to consider issues from different perspectives, focusing on what unites them rather than what divides them. Each teenager learns how they can make a difference:

TO QUALIFY, A TEEN MUST:

- **BE AGE 14 BY JANUARY 1 FOR YEAR 1 CAMP**
- **BE AGE 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ BY JULY 1 FOR YEAR 2 PROGRAM**
- **HAVE ONE MORE YEAR IN SCHOOL AFTER COMPLETING THE PROGRAM**



From Catholic and Protestant youth in Northern Ireland to youth in conflict globally.

Creating Friendships for Peace is modeled on the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI), which was a U.S.-based all-volunteer peace and friendship-building program that successfully brought together more than 2,000 Protestant and Catholic teens in Northern Ireland, as well as their families and friends. After a 21-year existence, CFPNI ended successfully in 2007.

Building on this success, a core group of CFPNI leaders partnered with a Cypriot team of volunteer coordinators to start The Cyprus Friendship Programme in 2009. This pilot program, which began under a U.S. nonprofit organization called HasNa, grew to create the U.S. nonprofit organization of Cyprus Friendship Program, Inc. (CFP Inc.) in 2011. It was formed to guide the entire program and manage its operations in the U.S. In 2018, the U.S. organization changed its name to Creating Friendships for Peace, Inc. to recognize its growth as a global peacebuilding organization. CFP works with teams of in-country volunteer adults representing multiple communities to manage the program in each conflict.



CFP 2 Year Program in Conflict Areas

Each teen's family contributes financially to cover some of their child's expenses.

YEAR 1 — PEACE CAMP



The camp program combines great recreation and valuable learning experiences, creating a strong community spirit among all campers. Activities that previous camp programs have included are:

- Facilitators guide teens through a trauma-informed process of how the history is taught differently in the different communities.
- Campers take a nature walk together.
- Excursion for dinner hosted by community members..
- Teens learn origami, the Japanese art of folding paper, and create the universal symbol for peace – the peace cranes.
- Teens participate in Drama/theatre workshops.
- Teens work together throughout the week to teach each other their languages with the support and guidance of professional instructors.
- Workshops address how campers can continue building peace after the camp, discussing if and how their families might get involved and how we can connect with other peacebuilding groups to promote a peace culture in Israel/Palestine.



YEAR 2 — U.S. RESIDENCY EXPERIENCE

Teens applying for the program will live 24/7 with a self-selected teen from the other community during the month of July. It's important to understand that your actions during this experience will impact you and your pair, your hosts, and fellow CFP participants.

CFP Residency in the U.S.

Living with a teen from another community for an entire month in the home of an American family has proven to be a life-changing experience for most CFP teens. They develop an understanding of different cultures and genuine friendships with their “pair” and their American family that often last for many years. They gain confidence and skills that better prepare them for a future as peacebuilders.

Like the Coordinators, all those involved in the U.S. program are volunteers. Parents and teens should be especially aware that American host families do not receive any payment to provide a home during this time.

The most significant costs of the program are the airline tickets and a health insurance package, which cover their stay in the U.S. These fees are managed by donations from individuals and organizations who believe in CFP's mission and goals. Families of each teen participating in the program also contribute, but CFP will not exclude a teenager because of family financial difficulties. Creating Friendships for Peace does not receive governmental financial aid nor is it affiliated with any political party.



HOW THE U.S. PROGRAM IS OPERATED

The Board of CFP Inc. elects a CFP Executive Director who, for two years, coordinates the operations of the U.S. program. Teens have stayed with host families in rural and urban areas in Georgia, Connecticut, Maryland, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Northern Virginia, Oregon/SW Washington, California, Hawaii. and Texas. Our U.S. Coordinators always look for new areas to add to the program. The general program in each area is the same, and host families all share an interest in world peace. It's important to note that hosting areas in the U.S. can change yearly.

To be considered, host families must be able to provide::

- A politically and religiously neutral home
- Daylong adult supervision in a safe environment
- A room for teens to share

An application process for all American hosts consists of an informational interview, a written application, a criminal background check, and a home visit. The Area Coordinator and the Executive Director screen and approve the hosts before they are accepted. American host profiles are sent to the Coordinators, who match each pair of the teens with a host family in the U.S., using criteria such as gender preference (if any) of the pairs, shared interests, hobbies, comfort levels with pets, etc.

Once a match is made between the pair and their American host(s), the teens and American families will receive each other's contact information. At this point, the American hosts and the teens and parents can start their first step in building a lifelong relationship.



LIVING IN THE U.S.

CFP expects Hosts to treat the teenagers as family members rather than tourists on holiday. Teens take part in their hosts' normal family summer activities. Each pair's experience may vary according to teen/ host placement. Teens must remember that the program's primary mission is to experience living with a fellow youth leader from the opposite side of the divide. CFP participation is for peace-building and leadership training, not a month of entertainment.

While in the U.S., hosts cover most everyday living expenses of the teenagers. Sometimes, teens must pay for their activities, e.g., a movie they attend, extra food they may want, optional group trips, or shopping. Remember that host families (and volunteers) are not paid to participate in CFP; teens should not make demands.



CFP teens will form relationships with their partners, as well as with their hosts. Nurturing these relationships requires committing to learning a new culture. Hosts have opened their homes to participate in a global peace process, to support teen leadership, and to learn about other cultures. They are not signing up to be tour guides or to offer a vacation to teens who want to visit the U.S. To be sure, families will want to expose the CFP teens to highlights of their region, but in general, teens should be prepared to fit into the families' daily lives and adjust to the hosts' routines. Host families may expect teens to help with household chores and participate in family activities. Like everywhere, each family in the U.S. is a bit different!

TRAVELING TO AND FROM THE U.S.

All teens travel with experienced chaperones. The U.S. transportation coordinator(s) monitor the flights, keeping both U.S. and In-Country Coordinators briefed on progress. The In-Country Coordinators then inform the parents. Should any travel concerns occur, the Transportation Coordinator(s), in partnership with CFP's travel agency, will manage the circumstances. At no time are the teens left unsupervised and the parents uninformed. All teens will travel to and from the U.S. as a group.



FOLLOWING THE RULES IS CRITICAL

A CFP teen is an ambassador for their country and all of us who volunteer with CFP. We have designed this program model to ensure a positive and memorable experience. Host families are informed about all the rules and expect the CFP teens to follow them **because rules are taken very seriously in the American culture. Families will find it difficult to understand if CFP teens break the rules.** These families make a massive commitment to CFP by opening their home for nearly an entire month to a pair of teens from another country. They cover most of the teens' living expenses and treat them like members of their own families to contribute to peace in the world. So, if the teens break the few but essential rules they have agreed to follow, they are reflecting poorly on themselves, their country, those who have donated to support this program, and the CFP Program as a whole.

Host families, as well as U.S. and In-Country Coordinators, want to avoid having the additional role of policing the enforcement of or negotiating the nuances of these rules. **To be clear, breaking the rules will result in consequences, including returning home from the U.S. at the expense of the teen's family and removal from Creating Friendships for Peace.**

ACTIVITIES DURING THE U.S. STAY

In each of the hosting areas, an Area Coordinator plans group activities. This leadership provides the opportunity to plan opportunities to nurture positive group connections between all the teens in each area. On average, twice a week, a group of CFP teens in the same area meet for activities that are meaningful, educational, and also great fun! The teens will also engage with American and CFP teens from other countries who are in conflict. CFP designs activities to inspire participating teens to become peacebuilding leaders, be sensitive to others, be responsible global citizens, and care for the environment. Group activities include team building, conflict resolution workshops, community service, and environmental awareness projects.



Money Matters

The amount of money that each teen can bring to the U.S. is limited. We strive to ensure that this amount is enough for CFP teens to purchase gifts for family members and extras for themselves. Teens must strictly observe this rule to ensure monetary equality for all participants. If a CFP teen brings much more money than their pair or spends more than the host family's children, they may create problems. **Credit/debit or gift or prepaid cash cards are not allowed, nor is any electronic money transfer such as Apple/Google Pay, Zelle/Paypal, or Venmo. Additionally, CFP teens are not permitted to buy electronic devices or other expensive presents for themselves or their friends who may have asked them to bring them back.**

The teens will have the opportunity to shop at malls, but this is not the reason they are in the U.S. If teens were allowed to bring large amounts of money for shopping, the host families might think they were not here for peacebuilding and are taking advantage of the host family's time and generosity and could reflect poorly on CFP by making Americans not wish to host. An offense could be unintentionally made by a teen when their hosts may have made personal sacrifices to be able to host the CFP teens. CFP believes a benefit of this limited finances policy is that the teens will develop the life skill of making and managing a monthly budget.

Communications with Family/Friends

The main reason teens go to the U.S. is to connect with their pair, other teens in America, their host family, and the larger group of CFP teens who will be in the same area and enjoying the uniqueness of peaceful coexistence that is so rare in their home country. For this reason, it is crucial to limit communications to home and internet use. At the same time, the CFP team respects the rights and concerns of the families on receiving news from their children.

To balance the two objectives of earning the trust of our teens' parents while limiting screen time because we have seen how it leads to a healthier experience for the teens and host families, some things are allowed, and some are not.

What IS Allowed:

When the teens arrive at the host family's home, they can make one short phone call to tell their parents they are safely settling in.

Once a week, the teens can communicate with their parents via videoconference for 30 minutes each.

Should both sets of parents meet to video-conference with both teens, the call can last 60 minutes. CFP encourages this at least once and suggests that the parents follow the call by having a meal together.

The use of YouTube may be allowed **only** as a social event between the teens and the host family and **only** with permission from the host family. The teens can participate in online activities according to the host family rules. For example, if host family teens watch YouTube videos, CFP teens can watch with them. The host families and CFP teens often sit down together and use Google Maps of different places or current events to enhance their conversations. The crucial factor in this use of technology is that it is part of a social event **with** the host family.

If families in Cyprus are at any time concerned and need more news, they can communicate directly with the host family by email or other means.

What is NOT Allowed:

Please refer to the COMMITMENT FOR PARTICIPATION document that contains the phone and social media policy.

These rules may initially seem complicated for teenagers (and their families). However, once in the U.S., teens often report being so happily busy with their group's activities and host families that they typically do not miss any of these devices. The teens who have been through the program similarly attest to this truth. Parents concerned about how their children spend too much time on social media and their mobile phones often agree that limited phone use is an opportunity for their teen to take a healthy break from screen time.

CFP's Program Timeline

Presentations about CFP are made in schools and youth clubs by In-Country Coordinators and CFP alumni.

Online applications are open to the public beginning January 1. Applications are conflict-specific and deadlines for each are determined annually in collaboration with the In-Country Coordinators to accommodate differing school schedules.

Interviews are conducted and selected applicants are accepted into the program from all communities.

Year 1 Camp

A summer camp program located within the conflict area is organized and managed by the In-Country Coordinators.

Year 2 U.S. Residency Program

A series of meetings with facilitated workshop activities takes place. They focus on leadership, communication, reconciliation and peacebuilding skills. At the end of the workshops, each teen chooses one person from the 'other side' of the same gender with whom he/she feels comfortable.

The relationships of friendship and trust created between the teenagers are typically very strong. They begin to be formed during the Year 1 camp and accelerate in Year 2 after the selection process is completed in March. After their month abroad, their friendship is a true relationship.

The families of each 'pair' also become connected with equally strong bonds. It is only normal that the parents of each teenager would be interested in meeting the young person that their child has chosen from the other community to be a roommate for one month. They also would normally wish to meet the family of this child. Very often, the circle becomes bigger with grandparents, uncles and aunts. We encourage many meetings of the two families during the month their children are in the U.S. as part of the peacebuilding process.

In the summer, each pair of teenagers lives with a host family (it is possible the family consists of a single man or woman with or without children as well as a married couple with or without children) in the U.S., sharing a bedroom to themselves. Some teens will be hosted by the same family during their stay and others may have 2 host families

Their stay in the U.S. allows them to experience a country where many differing cultures and religions live together in peace.

Typically, strong bonds of friendship also build between the teens and their host family that last well beyond the summer residential. Most often, that bonding occurs in such informal settings as watching a movie together.

Another important aim of the residential experience is to further advance the leadership and peacebuilding skills that had been promoted during the In-Country program activities.

After Summer

The In-Country Coordinators of the program organize activities and projects year round to spread the message that reconciliation is possible and that these young people are living examples of this truth.

Typically, in the fall, a CFP Graduation Celebration is held. After graduating, each participant is required to continue to participate in the CFP bi-communal activities for that school year.

CFP Alumni are encouraged to actively participate in the Alumni Association.